

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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R 150846Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 974

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, HU

SUBJECT: HUNGDEL PERFORMANCE IN ICCS

REFS: A) SAIGON 2133; B) STATE 45415; C) SAIGON 2410

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. AMBASSADOR HAD FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE UP HUNGARIAN PRESENCE IN SUB-REGIONAL SITES IN MEETINWITH ESZTERGALYOS, FORMER HEAD OF HUNGARIAN ICCS CONTINGENT AND NOW DEPUTY TO DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER NAGY, ON MARCH 8. ALTHOUGH ORIGINAL REUEST FOR MEETING HAD NOT BEEN TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS REQUESTED REFTEL B (BUT TO LAUNCH A TRADE PROMOTION EFFORT) AMBASSADOR ALSO TOOK OCCASION TO CONVEY TO HIM DEPT'S VIEWS PER REFTEL. WILL BE CALLING ALSO ON STATE SECY MARJAI LATER THIS WEEK FOR FORMAL PRESENTATION. ESZTERGALYOS DID NOT MAKE DIRECT REPLY, NOTING HE NOT NOW RESPONSIBLE FOR ICCS AND NOT UP TO DATE. HE THEN, HOWEVER, REVIEWED PERSONAL HAZARDS AND POLITICAL LIMITATIONS OF GOH ICCS PARTICIPATION AS HE HAD PERCEIVED THEM DURING HIS ELEVEN MONTHS IN VIETNAM, GIVING IMPRESSION GOH DESIRE TO BE MORE HELPFUL THAN THEY APPEAR

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TO BE BUT RESTRAINED IN APPROACH BY DIFFICULTY OF DEALING

WITH BOTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES. AMBASSADOR SAID HE WAS ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS IN AGAIN URGING HUNGARIANS BOTH REMAIN IN PRESENT SUB-REGIONAL TEAM SITES AND OCCUPY THOSE PREVIOUSLY EVACUATED. ADDED GOH SHOULD BE AWARE THAT MANY IN USG FELT GOH CURRENTLY HAD TENDENCY TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN ICCS THAN POLISH REPRESENTATIVE IN WAYS THAT WERE MORE PARTISAN, CITING DIFFERENCES IN SPEECHES IN HANOI (REFTEL C) AS EXAMPLE. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR BEGAN DISCUSSION ON ICCS BY REVIEWING SUB-REGIONAL SITES FROM WHICH HUNGARIAN PERSONNEL HAVE WITHDRAWN AND SAYING THAT USG URGED NOT ONLY THAT THE PRESENT SITES CONTINUE TO BE MANNED BUT THAT THE EVACUATED ONES ALSO SHOULD BE FILLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH AGREEMENTS. ESZTERGALYOS MADE NO DIRECT COMMENT OTHER THAN TO SAY IT WAS UNSAFE TO MAN MANY SUCH SITES. GOH HAD ALREADY HAD COUPLE OF DEATHS, AND OTHER PROBLEMS, IN SVN. "SMALL COUNTRY" LIKE HUNGARY COULD NOT ACCEPT MORE DEATHS IN HUNGARIAN ICCS CONTINGENT IN FARAWAY VIETNAM. GOH VIEW ALSO WAS THAT PRIMARY ROLE UNDER PARIS ACCORDS WAS THAT OF TWO-POWER JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION; AND IT WAS THIS THAT WAS NOT FUNCTIONING. AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT AGREEMENT REQUIRED THESE SITES TO BE MANNED. REASON AGREEMENT CALLED FOR USING MILITARY WAS BECAUSE DANGERS WERE INHERENT IN SITUATION; ARMY PERSONNEL WERE EXPECTED TO ASSUME PERSONAL RISKS AND MANNING OF SITES WAS IMPORTANT ICCS FUNCTION.

3. AFTER SOME FURTHER DISCUSSION THESE POINTS ESZTERGALYOS BECAME MORE EXPANSIVE AND BEGAN SPEAKING (ALMOST A MONOLOGUE) IN UNCONTENTIOUS MANNER ABOUT HOW HE HAD RUN THEIR MISSION AND ABOUT THE PROBLEMS HE FELT THEY FACED IN VIETNAM, PLACING SUBSTANTIAL EMPHASIS ON PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HAZARDS. EXAMPLE OF HIS VIEW WAS HIS COMMENT THAT WHILE INDONESIANS PRESUMABLY WERE BETTER PREPARED TO FACE VIETNAMESE CLIMATE AND WHILE THEY SERVE ONLY SIX MONTHS IN SVN VERSUS HUNGARIAN YEAR-LONG TOURS, THE INDONESIANS HAD HAD THREE SUICIDES. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS AND PROBLEMS HUNGDEL EXPERIENCING TO A COMBINATION OF A HARSH CLIMATE AND LONG HOURS OF HARD WORK FOR PERSONNEL OF ICCS CONTINGENT. ESZTERGALYOS SAID HE HAD ROTATED HUNGARIANS FROM SITE TO SITE WHEN HE WAS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VIETNAM TO HELP REDUCE PROPORTION OF DANGEROUS, UNHEALTHFUL DUTY. SAID THAT IF INDONESIANS HAD TROUBLE WITH CLIMATE AND MORALE WE COULD IMAGINE WHAT HUNGARIAN DIFFICULTIES WERE. ESZTERGALYOS OBSERVED HE ALSO HAD HAD NO EXPERIENCE IN SEA AND CONVEYED IMPLICATION GOH HAD BEEN UNPREPARED FOR ITS ROLE IN SVN AND PROBLEMS IT FOUND.

4. ON SUBJECT OF POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THEIR WORK,

ESZTERGALYOS SAID THAT HUNGARIANS HAD LITTLE IN COMMON WITH EITHER PRG OR SAIGON ADMINISTRATION. HUNGARIANS WOULD ONLY BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE VIETNAMESE IMPERFECTLY EVEN IF THEY SPOKE SAME LANGUAGE. THEIR VIEWS AND APPROACHES WERE NOT THE SAME. HE SAID THA THINGS MAY BE SMOOTHER NOW AND EMPHASIZED HIS VIEW THAT MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER ABOUT VIETNAM WAS QUOTE PATIENCE UNQUOTE. (ALSO EXPRESSED VIEW MEMBERS OF ICCS WORKING TOGETHER BETTER NOW THAN WHEN HE WAS THERE).

5. ESZTERGALYOS SAID DIRECT, FRANK APPROACH TO PROBLEMS WAS NOT POSSIBLE IN VIETNAMESE CULTURE. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO DIRECTLY CRITICIZE VIET CONG OR "SAIGON ADMINISTRATION", IF YOU DID EVERYTHING WAS SET BEPK. THIS WAS EVEN MORE SO "WITHIN FAMILY", HE SAID. THEY HAD HAD TO LEARN HOW TO APPROACH MATTERS BY MISTAKES AND EXPRIENCE. SAID THAT IN VIETNAMESE CUSTOM YOU CANNOT CRITICIZE YOUR DAUGHTER BUT MUST INSTEAD PASS WORD THROUGH YOUR SISTER-IN-LAW. IN REFERENCE TO PROBLEMS OF DEALING WITH THEM NOTED THAT WHILE VIETNAMESE PARTIES STARTED "AT DIFFERENT PLACES" THEY ARE "SAME PEOPLE". ADDED THAT HOSTILITIES AMONG SAME PEOPLE (CIVIL WARS) ARE THE HRDEST TO HEAL.

6. AT OPPORTUNE MOMENT IN COURSE CONVERSATION, AMBASSADOR ALSO TOOK OCCASION TO RAISE OUR IMPRESSION THAT GOH ROLE IN ICCS SOMETIMES MORE ACTIVE IN PARTISAN SENSE THAN POLISH, USING MATERIAL IN SAIGON 2410. SAID THIS POINT NOT INCLUDED IN HIS INSTRUCTIONS BUT HE FELT GOH SHOULD BE AWARE THAT US DISSATISFIED WITH POLISH ROLE AND THAT MANY IN USG FELT GOH WAS CURRENTLY EVEN LESS COOPERATIVE IN ICCS THAN WERE POLES ON NUMBER OF POINTS INVOLVING IMPARTIALITY OF ICCS. MENTIONED SPEECHES IN HANOI (PARA 6, REFTTEL C) IN WHICH NEW HUNGARIAN AMBASSADOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAD MADE STATEMENTS SUPPORTING DRV AND PRG WHILE POLISH AMBASSADOR HAD SIMPLY EXPRESSED ICCS SATISFACTION IN BEING THERE. ESZTERGALYOS LISTENED CAREFULLY BUT MADE NO COMMENT ON THIS POINT.

7. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR WILL FOLLOW UP LATER THIS WEEK ON SITE ISSUE WITH FORMAL CALL ON STATE SECY MARJAI, WHERE MORE CONSIDERED REPLY CAN BE EXPECTED. GIVEN ESZTERGALYOS' KNOWLEDGE OF ICCS AND VIETNAM, WE ALSO HOPE TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS VIETNAM ISSUE WITH HIM FROM TIME TO TIME ON INFORMAL BASIS.
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